

A Short History of CIA Intervention in Sixteen Foreign Countries

In July, 1947, Congress passed one of the most significant pieces of legislation in the history of America in peacetime. The National Security Act of 1947 created The National Security Council, the Department of Defense, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the United States Air Force and, not least of all, the CIA. This act provided the Agency with five principal duties:

1. To advise the National Security Council on matters concerning intelligence.
2. To make recommendations for the coordination of such intelligence matters.
3. To correlate and evaluate intelligence relating to national security and disseminate it to other government departments.
4. To perform "such additional services of common concern as the National Security Council determines can be more efficiently accomplished centrally."
5. To perform "such other functions and duties as the NSC would direct."

In 1949 Congress passed the Central Intelligence Agency Act, allowing the agency to disregard laws that required disclosure of information concerning the organization, to expend funds without regard to laws and regulations governing expenditures with no other accounting than the Director's vouchers, and to make contracts and purchases without advertising.

With such unprecedented authority, with unlimited access to money, with liberty to act without regard to scrutiny or review by either civilian or governmental organizations, the CIA has become a self-contained state. One observer ranks the CIA as the fourth world power, after the U.S., Russia, and China.

Partly because of the CIA's special "secret" status and partly because of the laziness of the press, the total history of CIA intervention in foreign countries has never been reported. What you read instead are fragments—an attempted bribe in Mexico last July, an assassination in Africa last November.

What emerges here is an atlas of intrigue but not a grand design; on the contrary, the CIA's record is as erratic and contradictory as that of any bureaucracy in the Federal stable. But you do begin to comprehend the enormous size of the CIA and its ruthless behavior. The rules permit murder, defoliation and drug addiction for political ends. Look at the record:

